

HOUSE BILL REPORT

2SSB 5347

As Passed House:
April 11, 2017

Title: An act relating to the definition of work activity for the purposes of the WorkFirst program.

Brief Description: Concerning the definition of work activity for the purposes of the WorkFirst program.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Walsh, Darneille, Zeiger, Rolfes, Sheldon, Angel and Hasegawa).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

None.

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/11/17, 92-6.

Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill

- Changes the limit on vocational training for WorkFirst recipients from 12 months to 24 months, subject to funding appropriated specifically for this purpose.

Staff: Kelci Karl-Robinson (786-7116).

Background:

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a federal block grant that provides temporary cash assistance, subsidized childcare, and work programs for families. Washington State's TANF program is called WorkFirst and is administered by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). With limited exceptions, adult recipients of TANF benefits must participate in one or more WorkFirst activities.

Federal law requires states to meet a work participation rate for adult TANF recipients. States not meeting the work participation rate may be subject to penalty. Federal statute defines both the activity as well as the length of time that a WorkFirst participant may spend

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on that activity. These definitions are also codified in state law. A work activity includes unsubsidized and subsidized paid employment, internships, on-the-job training, job search and job readiness assistance, vocational education training, education, and other activities. Under current law, a WorkFirst participant's vocational education training may not exceed 12 months.

Summary of Bill:

Subject to funding appropriated specifically for this purpose, the amount of vocational training that a WorkFirst participant may receive is increased from 12 months to 24 months.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.